

Aurora (1999 pilot)

The site is located in central Utah in Sevier County on South Main Street in Aurora. This was an abandoned service station with known environmental contamination present based on underground storage tank closure samples taken in 1991. The owner did not attempt to address the contamination and would not grant the Utah Department of Environmental Quality (UDEQ) access to the site. Finally the state gained access in 1999 under a court order and began work on the site in July of that year. The state was able to utilize the LUST trust fund for this site because the owner was uncooperative. Also in 1999 Sevier County acquired the property because of delinquent property taxes.

Partners

- Utah Department of Environmental Quality
- Utah Department of Health
- Sevier County Commissioners
- Aurora City
- U.S. EPA

The local community wanted the station demolished and the site reused for an access roadway to a new subdivision. However, Sevier County and Aurora City were concerned about environmental liability issues and cleanup costs and lacked the environmental resources to properly address their concerns. The county and city approached UDEQ and requested help with a targeted site assessment to determine the extent and degree of subsurface contamination and to establish cleanup levels based upon intended land use.

Accomplishments

In July 1999 UDEQ conducted a site assessment with the assistance of Aurora City, which donated equipment for the digging of “test pits.” UDEQ personnel collected soil and groundwater samples and completed the subsurface investigation report. The Utah Department of Health provided analytical results at no cost under a service agreement established by the Utah Legislature. All fieldwork, sampling, reporting, and risk-based cleanup/closure evaluations were done with no contractual costs incurred and with no involvement of an independent contractor. This unique partnership resulted in significant cost savings. Based on the study by UDEQ, the city demolished the existing building and constructed the desired access roadway for the local community. Because some contamination remained in-situ, Sevier County and Aurora City entered into a long-term lease agreement for fixing the land use as a roadway. The underutilized property, which had become an eyesore for the community and an environmental liability for Sevier County, has now been successfully redeveloped as a result of a unique partnership among local, state, and federal agencies.



Challenges

A major challenge for this project was that it was the first time the Utah tank program partnered with the federal government and rural local governmental agencies in using LUST trust fund money to facilitate cleanup and reuse of an abandoned site. The unique partnership formed among local and state agencies prevented the need for contractors in the process and resulted in a more timely approach as well as a better understanding of the challenges associated with reuse of a small site in a rural area.